

SENATE BILL 37

By Southerland

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;
Title 5; Title 6; Title 7; Title 9 and Title 54, relative
to retroreflective-compliant road signs.

WHEREAS, in 1992, the United States Congress directed the United States Department of Transportation to develop a minimum standard for retroreflectivity for pavement markings and signs to ensure nighttime visibility; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Transportation established minimum standards in 2008 and required all highway agencies to implement an assessment or management method for ensuring compliance by May 2014; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the potentially significant compliance costs that could be borne by local governments, the United States Department of Transportation did not establish a deadline for replacing noncompliant signs; and

WHEREAS, in addition to human drivers needing to see signs at night, autonomous vehicle cameras and sensors require retroreflective compliant signs for navigation; and

WHEREAS, autonomous vehicle technology is evolving rapidly, with estimates of as many as ten million autonomous vehicles on the nation's roads by the end of 2020; and

WHEREAS, a statewide effort will be important for Tennessee to prepare for the future of automotive transportation; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 54, Chapter 1, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) The department of transportation shall establish and administer a road sign replacement and procurement program to replace municipal and county regulatory and

warning road signs that do not comply with federal retroreflectivity standards established in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

(b) Under the program, each municipal and county government is authorized to submit a request to the department for replacement of regulatory and warning road signs that do not comply with federal retroreflectivity standards. Except as provided in subsection (c), regulatory and warning signs identified in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices are eligible for replacement. Upon certification or verification of a sign's noncompliance, the department shall replace the sign at no cost to the municipal or county government.

(c) The following categories of regulatory and warning road signs identified in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices are excluded from the program;

(1) R7 and R8 series signs, including parking, standing, and stopping signs; and

(2) R9 series and R10-1 through R10-4b signs, including walking, hitchhiking, and pedestrian crossing signs.

(d) The department shall begin the program on January 1, 2018, and terminate the program on December 31, 2020.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.